



# Greater Horn of Africa Peace Building Project

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CASE STUDY FIVE:

## Peace Building among Northeastern Pastoralists in Kenya: The Wajir Peace and Development Committee

March, 2001

Management Systems International  
600 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024 USA

Appendix from the Report:

**The Effectiveness of Civil Society Initiatives  
in Controlling Violent Conflicts and Building Peace**  
*A Study of Three Approaches in the Greater Horn of Africa*

Contract No. GS-23F-8012H, Task Order No. 623-N-00-99-00294-00 for  
DG/Conflict Evaluation and Analysis Services

## Table of Contents

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Executive Summary.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
The Sources and Contours of the Conflict.....	2
Social Economic Sources and Social Structure .....	2
Public Institutions .....	3
Mobilization, Political Dynamics, and Leaders .....	4
The Intervention: The Rise of the WPDC .....	4
Notable Successes in the Intervention .....	9
Impact of Intervention .....	14
Socioeconomic assets .....	14
Inter-group relationships .....	14
Social and political mobilization.....	15
Public institutions and processes .....	15
Political leaders .....	16
Public behavior and events .....	16
Facilitative and Constraining Factors.....	17
Facilitative Factors .....	17
Constraints .....	18
Conclusions.....	21
Al Fatah Declaration .....	24
References .....	27
Persons Interviewed .....	29

This report was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through a contract with Management Services International (MSI). The views and observations expressed do not necessarily reflect those of USAID. This report is a product completed for USAID/REDSO under the DG/Conflict Evaluation and Analysis Task Order, managed by Ned Greeley and Eric Richardson with Lee Foley.

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## Executive Summary

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This case study examines the work of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC), a community based organization, which has been working in conflict resolution and peace-building in the Wajir District of Kenya's Northeastern Province since 1993. The WPDC has also made moderately successful attempts to replicate its work in other districts of the province.

The conflict in Wajir district, as in other parts of Northeastern Province, is centered around competition for water and pasture land and is exacerbated by general neglect of the region by the central government. Violent conflict, both between communities and the state and among communities, has been endemic in the province since independence. Often disregarding the widespread inter-clan rivalry and violence, the central government has essentially ignored the conflict, especially when it has occurred between communities. For this reason the WPDC's efforts over the last six years have been a very significant innovation. The committee's success in several of its interventions have been significant, so much so that they have attracted notice from other regions of Kenya.

Our findings indicate that the socio-economic structures arising out of the competition over scarce resources predispose communities to intense conflict, especially in periods of drought. The weak and often sporadic and violent reactions of public institutions, notably the local security organs, have contributed not only to intense suspicion of the state but also 'exit' by communities that have turned toward informal and often violent ways to extract justice. Mobilization along clan lines to achieve protection and to respond to aggression has led to a general sense of insecurity and lawlessness and a seemingly unstoppable cycle of violence and destruction.

The creation of the WPDC in 1993 by community leaders turned this tide. Through the formation of several local level institutions, the WPDC has provided platforms to resolve disputes and enhance enforcement of state law mixed with traditional Somali notions of justice. The intervention has also offered innovative ways of co-opting the state to minimize its brutality against citizens, to re-orient its insular structures to facilitate participation, and to enhance its capacity to enforce justice. This partnership is mutually beneficial, as evidenced by comments from partners on both sides and by actual successes in peace making and mediation conducted by the WPDC with the material or enforcement support of the state.

The WPDC's intervention has been especially effective in terms of arresting the violent conflict that had perennially engulfed the district and resolving a number of potentially explosive situations. Moreover, the institutions to which the intervention has given rise, such as the elders council or the collaboration with the local administration, appear to have the potential for long-term peace preservation and enhancement. Our findings

indicate, however, that the WPDC has not been able to invest in the kinds of programs that would address the fundamental causes of conflict in the region.

Finally, we note several shortcomings (such as resource constraints or lack of institutionalization) that may hinder the WPDC's peace-making capacities and its long-term impact. Notable, however, is the fact that the intervention is quite replicable, as modestly successful attempts in at least two other districts suggest.

## Introduction

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Northeastern Kenya has been embroiled in perennial conflict, both between resident communities and the post-independence government, and among different communities living in the region. Indeed, throughout the independence period up until the 1997 Inter-Parliamentary Parties Group (IPPG) reforms that lifted emergency regulations,<sup>1</sup> the region was administered as a security zone. Especially endemic has been the conflict among communities, usually along clan lines and escalating to cyclical violence. It is in response to this type of conflict that the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) emerged in 1994. As will be evident in this case study, the WPDC has largely succeeded in arresting the conflict in Wajir district over the last six years.

The WPDC emerged in 1993-4 at the height of the most intense communal fighting in the region between 1992 and 1995. These 1992-95 clashes took a very heavy toll on Wajir district. Over 1,200 people were killed; another 2,000 were injured or raped; and thousands of livestock, including 15,000 sheep and goats, over 1,000 camels, and 2,500 cattle, were stolen. Business and daily life was severely disrupted by the looting or destruction of 500 businesses and the hijacking of 30 cars, five of which were never recovered. Fifty primary and secondary schools were disrupted, with adverse effects on 15,000 students; ten of these schools, serving 2,500 students, were forced to close (Ibrahim and Jenner 1996, p. 11). In the words of residents, Wajir had become "a mini-Mogadishu" (p. 12).

At the height of the crisis, violence spread to Wajir town, which had previously been spared for the most part. The murder of a UNICEF pilot by bandits from one clan accusing UNICEF of privileging another clan forced several NGOs to withdraw operations from the district, and many have yet to return. In this atmosphere, killings, revenge killings and counter killings, as well as rustling, were becoming the order of the day. The situation reached its zenith when market women in Wajir town refused to sell milk, vegetables, and meat to women from clans other than their own. Civil society had in effect disintegrated. All other components of society were rent: the elders of different clans stood by ineffectively or, as opinion leaders, urged and fueled counter attacks; the youths, who provided much of the fodder for violence, ran amok; and the women cheered them on, while the government passively stood by.

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<sup>1</sup> This was a package of constitutional, legal, and administrative reforms adopted in November 1997. The reforms eased a number of restrictive practices and lifted the State of Emergency in the region.

## The Sources and Contours of the Conflict

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Conflict in Wajir district, as in other Northeastern Province districts, is centered around competition for water and pasture. This competition is exacerbated not only by drought, but also by the state's behavior, which alternates among neglect, a weak presence, and intense security operations to make up for former shortcomings. In 1992-94, two other factors contributed to a worsening of the situation: the collapse of the Somalia government in 1990, which led to a proliferation of arms through the already porous borders; and the fluidity of the Kenyan transition from authoritarian rule to competitive electoral politics in 1991-92.

### Social Economic Sources and Social Structure

Northeastern Province is part of the arid and semi-arid terrain of northern Kenya. It is inhabited by nomadic pastoralists, nearly all of whom are ethnic Somalis. Wajir, with a land area of 56,000-KM square, is the largest of the three districts in the province, with a population of 321,000, of whom 40,000 are resident in the town.<sup>2</sup> Of this population, over 80 percent are nomadic pastoralists herding camels, cattle, goats, and sheep. As with nomadic pastoralists elsewhere, the inhabitants have, over time, evolved an elaborate itinerant mode of survival and various arrangements of sharing critical resources, such as water and pasture. Some of these are amicable arrangements while others have resulted from exercising dominance; but everywhere, conflict and the means that have evolved to manage it, have formed a significant part of the process of securing the livelihood of both humans and livestock. The environment is, therefore, a critical factor contributing to the conflict between various groups in the northeast in general, and in Wajir in particular.

The recurrent droughts intensify an already difficult situation in several expected and unexpected ways. First, drought forces greater competition over grazing land and water points, leading one group to seek pasture in areas demarcated as the preserves of another clan. The scarce rainfall makes it impossible to avoid conflict in periods of drought, since pasture, where it can be found, is not enough to support an expanding herd of local and roving herders. Severe droughts, such as the one underway in 2000 and the one in 1992, also lead to the depletion of the pastoralists' herds. For instance, in 1992, it was estimated that over 80 percent of the herd was destroyed (see *Wajir Story*). More significant, the conflict over scarce water and pasture that occurs in periods of drought is re-enacted as rainfall returns when a wave of rustling is precipitated by the pressure to re-stock one's herds.

## Public Institutions

The fragility of the environment and the competition for resources has affected how dominant state powers have governed the region. In its response, the British colonial administration allocated grazing reserves for each major group in the then Northern Frontier District as they did elsewhere in the colony. In Wajir district specifically, they allocated grazing reserves to the three major clans of Degodia, Ajuran, and Ogaden. These boundaries were then adopted by the post-independence government in demarcating the three electoral constituencies in Wajir from 1963 until 1997. As a result, the boundaries have been reified with political significance—through electoral competition, for example—which, as we shall see below, deepens some of the conflict. In clear response to the colonial imprint, the 1997 constituency review carved a fourth constituency in Wajir district in pursuit of preserving clan hegemonies. Thus, Wajir North constituency was carved out of Wajir West where clashes between the Degodia and Ajuran were perennial whenever the Degodia outvoted the Ajuran.

Structural factors also contribute to the conflict in Northeastern Province. Two important ones are a weak state and its secondary effects, and the changing and uncertain political conditions of the transition from authoritarianism to multi-party electoral politics. The state, based on the experience of fighting a separatist movement right after independence, administered the region as a security zone under emergency regulations until 1997. As a result, there has always been a high sensitivity to breakdowns of law and order, although this is not accompanied by high competence in maintaining the same. When skirmishes have occurred between communities or, more than occasionally, attacks have targeted government or civilian installations, the reactions by the state have alternated between ignoring the actions as 'normal' banditry long associated with the region (especially when civilians are targets) and dispatching punitive expeditions reminiscent of colonial pacification exercises (especially when government installations are targets). As a result, there is intense suspicion among residents against the government (typically staffed by "down-country" people) and reciprocal suspicion of the residents by the government and military installations.

Such neglect and prejudice is not lost on residents, observers and activists. For instance, Dekha Ibrahim and Janice Jenner (1996) note that in 1992-95 the violence and suffering in Northeastern Province was at least as severe as that occurring in [other regions, i.e., Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces] of Kenya, but was "almost unreported and unnoticed" (p. 1). This was the same time that ethnic clashes in these other provinces were widely covered in the media and the subject of a Parliamentary inquiry.

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<sup>2</sup> In 1992 the population was estimated at 275,000, with 18,000 in Wajir town. Displaced populations fleeing drought elsewhere in the northeast or fleeing civil war in Somalia have contributed to the expansion in the last decade.

Such neglect, state policies that reify clan boundaries, state violence and general ineffectiveness have led to an acceptance of social violence in the region as normal and expected.<sup>3</sup>

### **Mobilization, Political Dynamics, and Leaders**

The neglect and brutality of the state has also left an important gap in the delivery of justice, especially critical in an environment where survival entails much conflict for control and access of scarce resources. The result has been the mobilization of traditional and communal forces to respond to competition and to needs for justice.

In a province administered as a security zone, the sporadic presence and arbitrariness of the state were particularly evident with the actions of the police and other security actors, especially in the escalation of revenge killings that fueled the 1992-95 crisis. The incapacity of the police to end the violence was evident to residents as, at times, suspected culprits were never arrested or were allowed to go free after, residents suspected, paying bribes to security forces. The residents thus lost confidence in the justice system offered by the modern state. Instead they resorted to their own brand of justice, which often entailed avenging wrongs communally. Indeed, this is not dissimilar to the now established practice in other parts of Kenya, where lynching suspected criminals occurs regularly—a terrifying reminder of the extent to which the public has lost confidence in the police ability to arrest and prosecute dangerous criminals.

As will be evident, conflict behavior among political leaders has been muted and not very pronounced in the public sphere. Unlike the Rift Valley, for example, where public utterances in national media and public meetings have incited populations and spread propaganda fueling ethnic clashes, mobilization by public figures has been unnoticeable in Wajir.<sup>4</sup> Instead, a veneer of public civility masks the incitement that occurs within the smaller public spaces of intra-clan interactions and the reproductions of social reality within these closed spaces. As reported by interviewees, incitement ranges from elders soliciting revenge actions in reaction to specific incidents, to women taunting their men-folk to punish other clans for apparent wrongs, to social learning that demands revenge as substantive to justice and upholding family/clan honor.

### **The Intervention: The Rise of the WPDC**

In June 1993, some women drawn from the small well-educated and business elites in Wajir town were attending a wedding and began discussing how to arrest the violence

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the views expressed in a recent [Daily Nation](#) editorial, below.

<sup>4</sup> More recently, however, some indications of public utterances that incite violence have been evident in one of the conflicts (as will be noted below) where a local Member of Parliament has fueled aggression. Interestingly, this area is dominated by KANU supporters and has therefore not seen interests and interest articulation or aggression defined along party lines.



that immobilized the district. The impetus was the realization that there were no winners in the two-year, low-intensity, but costly, clash between clans. The breakdown of civility in the public space was in sharp contradiction to the amicable and ornate relations within the private spaces of women in Muslim weddings. Among the women spearheading the decision to seek a dialogue on peace were senior district government workers, two college-educated women, and an entrepreneur owning a private school. These women, drawn from different clans, agreed to work toward peace and formed a committee called Women for Peace to coordinate their efforts. Their initial activities included door-to-door canvassing for peace. They also facilitated a resolution by civil servants from various clans who, in continuing to work closely at their places of employment, contradicted the pervasive climate of inter-clan rivalry. These youthful (mostly male) civil servants came together to commit to peace and to working together as the Youth for Peace. The two initial groups—Women for Peace and Youth for Peace—formed the Wajir Peace Group (WPG).

A second and critical stage for the WPG was to attract elders to their nascent peace efforts. With support from the local UNICEF and Oxfam representatives, the WPG approached elders to encourage them to seek a cease-fire in the clashes and to organize meetings toward resolving the numerous conflicts. As a result, an additional committee called Elders for Peace was formed. While the women's appeal for peace was being echoed across the community and the youth were organizing activities to support the peace efforts, the creation of a council of elders (that came to be known as Al Fatah elders) was the watershed event.

The elders met in a Madrassa known as Al Fatah and were selected in a process that involved all clans. Each of the three major clans was asked to nominate 75 elders, while the smaller clans or 'corner' clans were asked to nominate four each. The selected elders met for seven days at Al Fatah for the express purpose of thrashing out the issues that affected their particular clans. Thereafter, each clan was asked to nominate a slate of elders (25 from each major clan and one each from the corner clans) to form a steering committee, which then selected 37 among them as the recognized Al Fatah elders. Each Al Fatah elder took an oath to be impartial. Drawn from a process considered representative by all clans, these elders would speak and act on behalf of the community, without division in terms of clans. A further seven days were devoted to consensus building on peace and setting up rules and codes of enforcing the peace and extracting allegiance. The result was the Al Fatah Declaration (See Appendix).

The Al Fatah Declaration has become the most important tool for peace building in Wajir district. It is the document most expressive of the creative mix of the Somali justice system, backed by the enforcement capacity of the state. It has deep legitimacy because elders with secure legitimacy in various competing clans negotiated it over time and because communities, especially women and youth, were recognized as stakeholders, if not prime movers. The Al Fatah elders have become, comparatively, a critical element to achieving peace in Wajir because, as men, they command greater traditional claims to leadership than women and, as older persons, more claims to community leadership than the youth. This subdivision in gender and age underscores

the extent to which traditional Somali social organization and social mores lend structure, legitimacy and efficacy to these efforts.

While the Women for Peace, Youth for Peace, and the Al Fatah elders work independently as separate entities, they are integral parts of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee. The WPDC, in turn, sits as part of the District Development Committee and the District Security Committee, both chaired by the District Commissioner. This gives the WPDC, which is a mix between a community-based organization (CBO) and a consortium of several government<sup>5</sup> and NGO service units, a rather unique profile. Most CBOs and NGOs in Kenya avoid integration into a government organ as this typically leads to stifling creativity and initiative and often compromises the independence of the organization. In the Wajir case, the situation has been very different.

Indeed, the decision to integrate into the government development and security committees was deliberate and strategic. The founders of the WPDC did not see how it could achieve peace and enforce it without the collaboration of the state. Moreover, the state, when left to its own devices, was in many instances acting in ways that did not necessarily promote peace, especially by its punitive conflict suppression. Integrating local administrative organs into peace building offered a way to reduce the suspicion inherent in the three-decade-old relationship between the state and the Northeastern communities. Assigning the chair's role to the District Commissioner also allowed for instant legitimacy and avoided further conflicts over which clan should head the group. Since the DC is the most senior official in the district, it is also easier to integrate the WPDC into the security committee, which comprises the heads of police, intelligence, and army in the district.

Indeed, as is evident in several instances, it is the local administration that has been co-opted rather than the other way round. For instance, in the current DC's own words, they (government) could not have achieved any peace without the help of the elders and the WPDC in general. Moreover, the WPDC has been able to co-opt two of the three DCs who came in after DC K. M. Rintari, who was critical to the Committee's founding and initial success. In the one exception, the Committee lobbied the higher levels of the provincial administration and the Permanent Secretary to have the DC transferred. This DC was viewed as ineffective in peace building due to a lackadaisical attitude or, worse, behavior that fueled the crisis.<sup>6</sup>

According to interviewees, the most difficult official to co-opt is usually the new army commander who comes in with the new division rotated into the district every six

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<sup>5</sup> Or, perhaps more correctly, a consortia of heads of these units.

<sup>6</sup> While rare, this is not unheard of. For instance, a DC from Moyale was transferred after local leaders accused him of being partial to one clan (Daily Nation July 4, 2000, p. 25; Daily Nation, April 13, 2000, p. 5).

months. The commander, usually a “down country” Kenyan, has typical prejudices compounded by the military’s reluctance to share security concerns with civilians. No Army commander has ever remained unreceptive to the WPDC’s work, however, due in large measure to the WPDC’s track record of achievement in conflict resolution and its networking with district administrative organs.

The WPDC take-off was highlighted by two events that occurred in 1993-94. In a more functional administrative system, these events would be considered quite mundane, but in Wajir, especially during that period, were inspiring and galvanizing. In one event, bandits hijacked a truck carrying 35 people and murdered the passengers. A typical response from the administration would have been either a lethargic and bureaucratic reaction or the arrest of suspects (often, innocent persons) and dismissal of these suspects afterwards for lack of evidence. In this case, however, the District Commissioner, Mr. K. M. Rintari, who was new to the area, personally visited the scene of the crime with security officers. In what one respondent described as the first time ever in Wajir’s post-independence experience, the security forces pursued the perpetrators in the night and arrested them within hours. These perpetrators were promptly prosecuted. As a result, the elders of the various clans agreed there was no need to extract a communal punishment on the perpetrators’ clans in response to the incident because the perpetrators had not been harbored by the clans and were obviously acting independently of the clan. Moreover, the culprits had already been dealt with under state law. As a result no revenge killings took place in connection with this incident.

The second incident involved the community in successful enforcement of the nascent Al Fatah declaration. This incident involved a typical case of murder arising out of a feud. In this case, one of two young men feuding over a gun killed the other. As a result the victim’s clan avenged his murder and the other clan avenged in equal measure. By the time the WPDC’s Rapid Response Team<sup>7</sup> arrived, 17 people had been killed in the violence and the cycle seemed unstoppable. The elders meeting spearheaded by the Al Fatah elders, however, was able to persuade the clans to cease fire and embrace provisions of the Al Fatah Declaration. For instance, it was agreed that the first killing was murder and would be dealt with by prosecuting the perpetrator who was immediately arrested. The subsequent killings were to be viewed as revenge killings in the Somali tradition and would be dealt with under Somali practices, including formal traditional apologies (*sabeen*), compensation, and blood money payments (see also Ibrahim and Jenner 1996, p. 18).

Women, as noted above, were critical to the initial peace effort, as they were the first to concretely articulate the inchoate search for peace in Wajir. In more settled times, women have not been at the center of activities. For instance, they rarely participate in

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<sup>7</sup> The Rapid Response Team is an ad hoc committee of mostly elders, who can be mobilized at short notice to investigate and establish first contact with communities in crisis.

the Rapid Response Teams and the meetings with the DC almost exclusively involve male elders. This is not always the case, however. Educated women actually occupy leading positions within the WPDC. For instance the secretary to the Committee is Ms. Nuria Abdilahi; the previous secretary was Ms. Dekha Ibrahim, who is presently away on study leave. These women sit in the District Development Committee (DDC) and the District Security Committee (DSC), the most important administrative organs in the district.

Women have also been involved in direct peace work. For example, women representatives from the WPDC were critical to resolving the dispute at Berjanai, where villagers got into a violent confrontation due to water shortages arising from the current drought. Accompanied by two elders, two women members of the WPDC held meetings with the clan women involved in the dispute and convinced them to share the resource. At other times, the women in the WPDC have undertaken work to alleviate the secondary effects of violence, which often are most burdensome to women. For example, in 1998 the Women for Peace raised funds among women in Wajir to buy household implements and food for distraught survivors of the 1998 Bagalla massacre.<sup>8</sup> Women have also been critical to the early warning system, as they interact with one another across clan lines more regularly than other community members do.

The youth have also been instrumental in securing peace in Wajir district. Youths have been the main perpetrators of violence, and, as such, their integration into the peace process very significantly diminishes the availability of a reserve of discontented (or otherwise unoccupied) youths who can be mobilized easily into violence. Educated young men who occupy important civil service positions in the district (such as heads of departments or provincial administration officers) lead the youth movement.<sup>9</sup> The Youth for Peace programs seek to neutralize factors contributing to idleness and therefore recruitment into militia. For example, the youth leaders have raised funds and equipment from business people and the local Catholic Church to sponsor a soccer tournament and the local youth polytechnic. The latter is particularly important in developing marketable skills among the growing mass of unemployed and encouraging non-violent lifestyles. Moreover, the youth leaders and young men (such as those in the soccer league) provide examples of peaceful and fruitful co-existence among people from different clans.

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<sup>8</sup> In this incident in 1998 the military and police reportedly murdered scores of Somali and/or Boran people in Wajir in a security operation.

<sup>9</sup> The youth leaders include administrators in the district commissioner's office, the district co-operatives officer, a head of a local NGO, and a officer in charge of the arid lands program sponsored by the Office of the President. They all have at least an advanced high school diploma or diploma institute training, and at least one is a university graduate.

## Notable Successes in the Intervention

The Wajir Peace and Development Committee has succeeded in six notable ways:

- a) It has achieved peaceful settlements in most interventions,
- b) It has established an infrastructure for responding to conflict and promoting peace,
- c) It has revived elements of the pre-colonial Somali justice system, which, when combined with the modern state system, seems to assure more peace than either one by itself,
- d) It has induced perceptible attitudinal change and reduced the incidents of retaliation,
- e) It has targeted, with modest success, (ex-)combatants through development projects, and,
- f) It has produced a model of CBO-government collaboration in peace building that is unique in Kenya and that is being replicated in other northeastern communities.

These impacts are replicable in a number of instances and could be used to enhance other emerging models of community-government collaboration in peace building.<sup>10</sup>

As anywhere else, peace building is an arduous task and involves long, protracted processes. Three examples will illustrate how the WPDC has tried to achieve peace and the effect it has had.

The first illustrative example arises from events in December 1999, when bandits from state-less Somalia attacked a remote Kenya Police Post in the border division of Diff and stole an HK 11 light machine gun. This by itself is not an unfamiliar occurrence in Northeastern Province. As was the regular practice, the government began to mobilize its security forces to retrieve the gun. From past experience the Somali elders in Wajir knew that the government would apply maximum force, often achieving few of its objectives and instead exacting colossal collateral damage in terms of harassment, arrests, and, often, rape of women from Kenyan villages where the government's writ could be extended.

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<sup>10</sup> For instance, the OAU/IBAR program pursues similar community based peace-building work among groups in the northern Kenya area, especially among the Turkana of Kenya, the Taposa of Southern Sudan and the Karamojong of Uganda. Their main entry point is veterinary services, which cannot go on without peace among the communities. They found that the communities were willing to work together on issues related to animal health, from which then peace teams and peace negotiations typically arose with facilitation by OAU/IBAR. A similar program is operated by the Intermediate Technology Development Group, which is facilitating community-level peace building among various clans in the northern region of Kenya, especially Marsabit.

As a result, elders from the WPDC, especially members of Al Fatah, organized to send a peace and recovery mission to Somalia. As is the case with such missions, resources were cobbled together from various sources: the DC provided a vehicle, fuel, and armed escort, while other organizations (such as Oxfam and Nomadic Primary Health Care) provided other logistical support, including food for the elders. The elders drove 50-60 miles into Somalia to meet clan elders there. They explained to the Somalia clan elders that the bandits' actions would bring untold suffering to their kin in Kenya and that they, the elders in Somalia, should, instead of harboring the bandits, facilitate the return of the gun. As a result, the elders of the other clan took it upon themselves to find the culprits with the firearm, retrieve it, and hand it over to the Al Fatah elders and the Kenyan authorities at the border (or what remains of it!). Commendation from the DC was effusive, as reflected in his letter to the committee and individual Al Fatah elders and copied to the Provincial Commissioner.<sup>11</sup>

In another example, the WPDC was invited to help resolve clan feuds in neighboring Garissa district. The intervention was triggered by an attack of the Aulivan clan by the Abduwak clan as part of a long running feud. On April 1 and 2, 2000, the Al Fatah elders were invited by local leaders and the DC to mediate between the two clans. As a result, a number of resolutions echoing the Al Fatah Declaration were adopted by the two clans in a mediated meeting at the Teacher Training College in Garissa. In a pattern mirroring how the Al Fatah Declaration was established, the mediation process included an initial period of thrashing out the animus, after which the groups agreed on 'sabeen' or traditional apology and an immediate cease-fire.

A center piece of the Al Fatah Declaration was adopted in Garissa: any community that contravenes the peace resolution and harbors bandits would be fined twice the number of animals stolen and pay the traditional Somali compensation for loss of life. Communities living near scenes of highway robbery would henceforth be held responsible for thuggery in their areas and pay for the loss and damage. The meeting culminated in the formation of a PDC in Garissa to emulate the one in Wajir district. Significantly, since the April peace-building work by the WPDC, no clan violence had been reported among the Abduwaks and the Auliyans by mid-August when fieldwork for this study was completed.

Finally, the WPDC has been active in the ongoing dispute between the Garre and the Ajuran clans in northern Wajir, on the border of Wajir and Mandera districts. In the latest skirmish before the WPDC got involved, 35 people had died and over 6,000 head of cattle had been stolen between January and July 2000. This conflict encapsulates the range of factors that animate violent conflict in Northeastern Province. It also illustrates the difficulty of achieving success without repeated efforts at mediation and the difficulties arising from the involvement of politicians in already complicated conflicts.

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<sup>11</sup> This letter was shown to the author during the case study site visit.

In northern Wajir, the fighting has been between the Garre clan, which comes principally from Mandera district and has close relations in Ethiopia, and the Ajuran community, which is the majority clan in the area, especially in the new Wajir North constituency. The Garre, who are pastoralists and farmers, have over the years settled into Wajir North and recently had a chief appointed for them to ease administration. The Ajuran community sees this trend in population expansion, sedentary farming, and the recent political inroads (selection of a chief) among the Garre as very troubling. The Ajuran fear this settlement threatens not only their access to pasture, but also their political dominance in the constituency ostensibly carved out in 1997 for their benefit. In fact, the Ajuran aver that the new chief is in fact a Mandera resident and they vow not to accept "foreign" chiefs in Wajir district (Daily Nation, April 27, 2000).<sup>12</sup>

Thus the clashes that have pitted these two communities have escalated, with the government seemingly impotent, while the local MP (elected in the new constituency by the Ajuran majority) stokes Ajuran discontent by asking the Garre to return to 'their' areas in Mandera. The death toll is high and the livestock rustling has led to thousands of cattle and camels being taken across the border to Ethiopia.

As the Wajir PDC secretary noted on a peace making visit, the tension in the area was palpable:

At Gurar the situation was tense and all the residents of the town were camped at the police station. The fear was caused by the killing of two Ajuran clansmen.... At Bute station the situation was even more tense since all the residents of the town were camped at the police (station), (Administration) police lines and also at Bute Arid Zone primary school... (Elmi 2000, p. 1).

Indeed, reminiscent of the lawlessness in 1992-95 that triggered the Wajir PDC creation, the Daily Nation editorialized:

The Government has lost grip of the security situation in northern, eastern, and northeastern Kenya. It is unimaginable that a Government can condone this kind of anarchy. These regions are fast acquiring the image of ungovernable bastions run by untouchable clan warlords (Daily Nation, July 22, 2000, p. 6).

In this context of a seemingly hopeless and spiraling violent situation, the WPDC has been very active in this area since the conflict broke out. In April 2000 WPDC facilitated

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<sup>12</sup> This issue echoes a similar conflict in Isiolo where ethnic Somali had moved into the area in the mid-1990s due to drought. However, over the years they have sunk roots in these areas and by the 1997 elections they were able to register to vote and elect one of their own as a councilor and contribute significantly to the election of the current Member of Parliament. In the violence in Isiolo where over 100 people were killed, the political leaders (including cabinet members) have agreed—contrary to the constitution—to repatriate the ethnic Somali to 'their' areas.) See Daily Nation May 26, 2000, p. 32; May 30, 2000, p. 7.

a four-day meeting between elders from Mandera and Wajir districts. The initial session consisted of both sides airing their grievances in open discussions. The nature of the complaints highlights the range of factors contributing to conflict in the region and the depth of this conflict.

For instance, Garre businessmen in the region complained of being robbed with impunity by Ajuran youths and claimed the bandits had established nine "toll stations" on the roads leading into the town (Elmi 2000, p. 2). The Garre also complained of being discriminated against in access to water and pasture and in the issuance of national identity cards in Bute sub-district (Elmi 2000, p. 2). On their part, the Ajurans complained that the Garre came to the district in 1979 during a severe drought but never left after conditions improved in their home regions. Instead they invited their kin to join them in their new settlements. They accused the Garre of sponsoring highway banditry and cutting off the Ajuran from their neighbors. The Ajurans also accused the Garre of sponsoring banditry attacks on villages and outposts, including sponsoring or sheltering "their allies" from the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).<sup>13</sup>

After this initial parley, the two groups agreed to peace-building resolutions after the traditional *sabeen* and a fine of KShs. 10,000 (US\$150) was imposed on the Garre for breaking the peace. The two communities then agreed to cease fire, impose fines of 200 camels for any murderous breach of the cease-fire, re-settle displaced families and have quarterly peace meetings between the two districts. The District Commissioners for Wajir and Mandera present or represented at the peace meetings were to provide security for the re-settlement of the displaced people. As part of this resettlement program, a PDC committee made up of five elders from each warring clan was selected. For the next three days the committee, joined by three elders from the WPDC and one its youth leaders, devoted its energies to re-settlement.

The immediate result was the easing of tensions, the resettlement of displaced people, and the creation of a Mandera-Wajir (Garre-Ajuran) PDC (see also Daily Nation April 11, 2000, p. 18). At the time of the author's fieldwork in Wajir (July/August 2000), conflict had resumed in the north, and the WPDC was making arrangements to return for further mediation. The failure to secure lasting peace is probably not surprising, as is evident in the government's own failure to secure peace through internal efforts via police action or external efforts via diplomatic action. This underscores the difficulty of resolving such conflicts at the formal institutional level. For example, the Minister of Foreign Affairs reported to Parliament that he had summoned the Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya to demand that 6,000 head of cattle stolen in one of the raids be returned, and the Ambassador had undertaken to facilitate the return (Daily Nation, June 19, 2000). Yet by the time this author visited Wajir several months later, the

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<sup>13</sup> In addition there have also been accusations that the Garre collude with the Tigray People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (TPRLF). However, no evidence was found to support these claims. Such accusations are most suspect (Daily Nation, June 19, 2000, p. 5).



animals had not been returned and the DC had been requested to go Ethiopia to discuss the conflict with his counterpart.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the area MP also noted in Parliament that the animals had not been returned, contradicting the Foreign Minister's optimistic statement.

## Impact of Intervention

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In terms of the framework set out for this assessment and for the comparative studies within which it is undertaken, a number of outcomes can be traced to the intervention. While impact is not noticeable (or even expected) in all the factors investigated, where it is, it has been significant. Although its permanence is difficult to project, the effects of the WPDC's work is especially significant in the degree of change it has wrought on social reality in the district. Often radical within the local context (and indeed Kenya), such change is sustained by the commitment of the WPDC and its partners in spite of a host of contraindications, mostly in terms of the historical precedents or social practices.

### Socioeconomic assets

Very few of the socio-economic structures shaped predominantly by the long-term climate patterns of drought and scarcity have been changed by the work of the WPDC. This clearly has not been, however, a central goal of the WPDC. The Committee's goals have focused on resolving *conflicts* that arise out of these foundational causes of intense competition and conflict. Thus, the WPDC has not invested efforts in any programs to structurally manage the distribution or sharing of scarce resources such as water or pasture, but instead has focused on *ad hoc* responses to conflict that arise over such matters.

Even when faced with instances where the conflict clearly arises from inequitable allocation of resources or a break down of resource-sharing mechanisms, the WPDC's intervention has been driven most immediately by the priority to restore peace rather than establish any equity in sharing resources. This is clearly the case in the examples cited of the conflict over water among women in Barjenai or the conflict over land among the Garre and the Ajuran. Moreover, as is clear in the articulation of the intervention, the originators and implementers of the intervention pay little attention to the distribution of socio-economic assets. The WPDC's work does have the potential, however, for affecting distributive issues as peace making produces a momentum for setting up structures that could address them.

### Inter-group relationships

The WPDC interventions have had the most pronounced effect on the relationship between groups, especially clans, in Wajir district, and in Garissa and Mandera where it has sought to replicate its work. For instance, as is evident in the examples highlighted, the WPDC's interventions, starting with re-building community relations rent by the communal warfare in 1992-95, have reduced feelings of insecurity and every day tensions in Wajir.

The reduction of tensions in Wajir is celebrated in Wajir town. Several informants reported that, during the conflict, it was inadvisable to take a casual walk in town after dark as one would be risking life and limb. Yet, at the time fieldwork for this study was

undertaken, Wajir town was sleepy but active in the evenings. The situation evident in 1993-95 was effectively reversed and much of the credit, as observers including the local government officials indicated, goes to the work of the WPDC in enhancing communication between clans. The creation of the supra-clan Al Fatah group, with its rapid response capacity, wide legitimacy and recognized neutrality, were significant assets in reducing tensions.

The fact that the WPDC has been invited to mediate conflicts in neighboring districts, and has been the subject of at least one visit by community leaders from Rift Valley Province, is a noteworthy indicator of their success in restoring civility, justice, and order among groups. Where the WPDC has been invited to mediate conflicts—in Garissa and Mandera, for example—it has had modest success in easing tensions and setting up intra-clan platforms for conflict resolution.

### **Social and political mobilization**

Related to the WPDC's success in pacifying inter-group relations, its interventions have had a substantial influence on 'braking' the wide spread mobilization of clans into warring factions. While the WPDC has not undertaken any effort to socialize the population into re-imaging themselves outside clans, it has succeeded in reducing the tendency to mobilize for violent action within clans. The WPDC legitimizes these clans but seeks to use their networks and internal cohesion as tools to enforce justice and behavior supportive of the preservation of civil peace. Instead of attempting to change the structures of Somali society (as every dominant power has previously tried to do), the WPDC worked through Somali structures while changing the incentives and stimuli toward preferences for peace and legitimate justice upheld by both the state and the traditional system. Thus the WPDC work has been successful in large part due not to de-legitimizing or exploiting clan arrangements (as the colonialists and the modern state did) but to finding positive synergies within these versatile arrangements to galvanize for peace.

### **Public institutions and processes**

This is another area where the WPDC's impact has been profound, although the durability of this impact remains an open question. Clearly, the WPDC has been very effective in co-opting or collaborating with local administrative structures in ways that were unheard of in the district and that are still very rare in Kenya. In its somewhat fluid set-up, the WPDC has opened up several platforms for discussing local issues through its constituent units, such as the Women for Peace, the Youth for Peace, and the Al Fatah elders. As a separate entity and as a member of the DDC, the WPDC has also provided the most significant platform for the public to participate in local administrative decisions.

Second, the interventions that the WPDC has pursued in communities have brought to those communities a platform for discussion of conflict issues and a trusted and resourceful (in terms of enforcement) partner to mediate conflicts. At the community

level too, the WPDC has turned the otherwise insular and often brutal structures of the local administration into more open, accessible, and partnering institutions in resolving community problems from conflicts—the main preoccupation—to drought relief.

Overall, the WPDC has created new processes, opened up existing ones, and made decision-making processes to be perceived as more legitimate across all clans. Indeed, it is not surprising that an immediately noticeable difference between Wajir community actors and similar persons encountered by the author in other parts of Kenya, is the level of efficacy the former exhibit regardless of class, age, or clan.

### **Political leaders**

The effect of the WPDC's interventions on political leaders and their role in conflict and conflict resolution in Wajir district is not evident. This is because the conflicts have been mainly communal and the dialogue has not involved political leaders, but clan elders, women, and others acting at levels lower than most politicians pursue. Moreover, the conflicts have not involved the kind of partisan politics that have tended to intensify and escalate violent conflict in other parts of Kenya. Indeed, in the situation noted in north Wajir the involvement of the local MP is incidental to the core issues of conflict, i.e., competition over access to resources.

### **Public behavior and events**

Related to the minimal role played by politicians, the conflict in the region has also not been animated by the public actions and rhetoric of individuals or group leaders. Unlike the ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley or even the parallel conflict in Eastern Province (e.g., Isiolo), the Wajir case shows very little evidence of public commentary, rhetoric or incitement.<sup>15</sup> Most of the violent acts that fuel conflict in Wajir are undertaken by individuals or by small bands (e.g., murder and banditry), while revenge actions are similarly planned within private spaces in clans or enacted following what seem to be socially learned pathways to protect honor and exact justice.

One noticeable impact of the WPDC's work is a shift in how people interpret such public events as murder and robbery. By de-emphasizing rumors or claims that these crimes are targeted at clans and by emphasizing that they are more random than targeted, the WPCD has minimized the possibility of revenge. The example of the interpretation of the conflict (and murderous spree) that flared after the murder of one of the two youths feuding over a gun is instructive in this case. Similarly, such alternative interpretation was useful in arresting revenge violence after the murder of the thirty-five truck passengers in 1993.

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<sup>15</sup> The conflict in Wajir North is an exception, but not a significant one as noted above.

## Facilitative and Constraining Factors

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In spite of the checkered results in terms of achieving a permanent peace, especially in recent conflicts, the Wajir PDC is a credible example of how peace building can be effected at the grassroots level. In terms of what makes this model work, three factors can be isolated analytically, although it is clear they work in cohort.

### Facilitative Factors

First is the range of alliances on which the Wajir PDC subsists. The collaboration brings together several organizations and individuals and therefore resources and leverage vis-a-vis the government and feuding communities. The collaboration with government eases coordination and provides both legitimacy and the weight of legal sanction when necessary. The collaboration with elders especially lends credence to the traditional system of justice that the peace efforts are dependent on. Collaboration with NGOs and other CBOs brings in several essential resources such as vehicles, fuel, food, and development follow-up or at least the promise of it.

These alliances between different sectors produce access to resources for the resource-starved organization. For example to respond to conflict in the vast arid area it is necessary to have access to all-terrain vehicles and fuel which, alternatively, NGOs and the government (through the DC) have provided. Similarly peace work would be impossible to pursue in the context of continued insecurity without the support of military personnel and regular police to enforce the writ of the state and backstop the peace initiatives with legitimate (and comparatively greater) force. As such the presence of the securocrats in the Wajir PDC and the material, planning, and logistical support from the DC, the police, and the Army is critical to the PDC's efforts.

A second critical factor has been the revived traditional Somali justice system, which provides an instantly legitimate system that is acceptable to most people and which is intertwined with the daily workings of the communities. The ability to blend this system, which relies on face-to-face interactions, with the justice system of the modern state, which relies on force, has been fruitful in achieving peace or credible movement toward peace. Given the modern system faces severe legitimacy problems because of its sporadic, corruptible, and inefficient ways, it was critical that another system was available to supplement its legitimacy.

The final factor that contributed to Wajir PDC's emergence and success is the presence of committed local administrative officials willing to collaborate and support the local-level initiatives. The first opportunity for trying the community intervention arose with the posting of the former DC Mr. K. M. Rintari, who all interviewees asserted was instrumental in establishing the PDC, in securing peace in 1993-4, and in integrating the Wajir PDC into the district governance organs. As one respondent asserted, Rintari opened up the otherwise insular administration and even allowed civilians to travel in the same vehicles as security officers -- a situation unheard of before. Indeed, Rintari's

centrality to the peace efforts is evident from the current DC's eager attempts to sustain and further the work of his predecessor and in his assertion that "he left very big shoes to fill". The fortuitous nature of this opportunity was evident when a contrary DC was posted to the area after Rintari and the PDC and its allies were forced to lobby for his removal due to his hostility to or ineffectiveness in peace efforts.

## **Constraints**

Even with these notable achievements the Wajir PDC has been constrained in several ways. Among the most important is a shortage of resources to facilitate rapid response to conflict and to allow for institutionalization of peace infrastructure. The fact that the PDC has always had to cobble together resources from several sympathetic partners to respond to conflicts indicates its very weak capacity. Most important, the PDC has operated on its own local fund-raising efforts so far without much input from supportive or admiring partners, USAID included. The extent of local support has included the elders and women giving freely of their time for peace activities and thus taking them away from their own livelihood duties. The government officials and NGO employees usually have to take off work or work on their own time for the efforts; others such as business people have to abandon their activities, often at very short notice. Important peace promotion activities such as a peace festival and a peace prize given to chiefs most active in promoting peace among their subjects have had to be suspended after their launch due to lack of funds to sustain them beyond the first year.

Consistent donor support is therefore lacking with the effect of reducing the capacity of the group to respond effectively and efficiently to conflict situations, to support early warning and rapid response systems, and to implement peace resolutions. Donor support has at best been sporadic. For instance, Oxfam has provided emergency funds, vehicles, or food but not programmatic support; the DC has also provided vehicles from his already strained motor pool. Individuals and business people have offered foodstuff for traveling peace teams, while women have fund-raised from among themselves for relief supplies for victim families. Most significant is that the community has been able to sustain this level of giving for the last seven years. However, the burden has exacted a price in terms of attrition among the elders and women groups.

More significantly, this resource constraint has endangered activities among the youth, which of necessity should be ongoing rather than episodic as with mediation. For example, the Youth Polytechnic project has effectively stalled due to lack of funds. The polytechnic's revival was conceived as a way of re-training youth so as to provide alternative occupations to idle youth easily recruited into violent excursions. The polytechnic is a state-supported institution with a capacity of 100 students. However, the state support is dismal: the infrastructure is decayed, there is no water on the campus, and the staff is severely underpaid.<sup>16</sup> As a result the enrolment is only 23 students. The

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<sup>16</sup> The highest paid instructor earns KShs. 2000 [i.e. US\$ 26 a month].

Wajir PDC has previously provided the polytechnic with KShs. 100,000 (i.e. US\$ 1,333) out of local fundraising and the Catholic mission provided free lunch for students. However, the PDC has not been able to continue this support and the Catholic mission has suspended its program. In the current drought conditions it is unlikely the community will be able to support the Wajir PDC initiatives at the same level as before. People's resources are extremely stretched, time is devoted mostly to making ends meet, while the DC's and NGO resources are devoted to the famine relief effort.

Apart from resource scarcity, the PDC also suffers from organizational and structural weaknesses. It is a nebulous structure, whose strength is that it is a hub of collaboration but which then undermines its institutionalization. As such many of its internal workings are reliant on personal and professional ties developed from close physical proximity. For instance, the PDC is housed with two of its most significant organizational supporters (the Nomadic Primary Health Care project and the District Cooperative Office) and is a stone-throw from the District Commissioner's complex. The organization's emergence from personal ties and the close proximity of its officers has allowed for smooth operations but has also resulted in underdeveloped institutional mechanisms of decision making. Although WPDC members confirm no evident problems, this remains a potential pitfall.

For example, there is really no central office and no established modes of decision making nor established patterns of authority. In effect while its conflict response is admirable, the Wajir PDC's structures are weak as demonstrated by its lack of formal registration, and its capacity is fragile as demonstrated by its difficulties raising funds outside the local area. The fact that its senior and founding members are a like-minded cohort of government or NGO workers is a potential hazard as retrenchment and re-deployment -- ever likely in the context of a contracting state -- would seriously undermine its cohesion.

Moreover, the WPDC's close relationship with the government is difficult to characterize precisely and thus to project its implications. Is it a client, an independent peace organ, a component of the security infrastructure, or a useful but ultimately dependent ally? Each of these designations would have its limitations. While such limitations are not as yet evident, they are likely to emerge in time, especially if there is a turnover in the Committee's membership. Indeed, close relations with the government may taint an organization's reactions to social issues (see Ndegwa 1996). This is so especially in a case such as this where the organization is dependent on the government at several levels and is dealing in an area that is clearly at the core of the imperatives of the state (i.e. security). It is clear that while the activities of the Wajir PDC indicate wide latitude, it is one that is ultimately circumscribed by state interests.

Finally, the very nature of the conflict in Wajir, and Northeastern Province as a whole poses the ultimate challenge to the Wajir Peace and Development Committee. The conflict is driven, as noted earlier, by poverty and environmental challenges complicated by state action and inaction. The environmental regime of cyclical droughts, often accompanied by famine and herd depletion, the intense competition for pasture and

water even in good weather, and the history of reified colonial and (now) electoral boundaries all fuel a vicious cycle of despair, conflict, and violence.

Clearly, the WPDC is most successful in stopping the violence and especially the revenge killings that animate the conflict within the district. Its efforts to promote peace-building infrastructure (e.g. Al Fatah Declaration, Rapid Response Teams, and replica PDCs in Mandera, Garissa, and Moyale) have met credible but limited success. However, its efforts to fully institutionalize itself, its peace structures, and indeed 'peace through development' projects to address the core causes of conflict have yet to take-off due to resource and capacity constraints.



## Conclusions

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The Wajir Peace and Development Committee illustrates the possibilities for local level dialogue for peace building in Kenya. The WPDC's peace building activities in Wajir district and elsewhere in Kenya over the last six years has produced several instances of success at arresting immediate conflict; its innovative institutions have the potential for effecting long lasting conflict management. In spite of the several challenges it faces and the limited scope of its goals and actual work, the WPDC provides us with several lessons that can be applied in replicating this model elsewhere.

At the most basic level, the WPDC's various interventions have arrested conflict, an especially significant outcome in a situation such as Wajir and Northeastern Province in general. Beyond this, it has enhanced the institutional context within which pursuit of more sustainable peace could be achieved. Principal among its contributions has been the introduction of community-level institutions for dialogue and legitimate enforcement; re-orienting the actions and attitudes of local state actors; and, generally increasing local capacity to address immediate problems of violent conflict.

The WPDC's limitations are clearly in the area of long-term sustainability of its conflict containment and, even more importantly, its neutralizing the fundamental causes of conflict. Thus, the Committee has little capacity to sustain its work under present resource constraints. However, the WPDC has established itself as a credible institution providing a real possibility for expanding into interventions that will ultimately address the underlying causes of conflict in the region. As the instances of replication detailed in the discussion above suggest, the WPDC intervention is one that is infinitely replicable, especially in similar conflict environments such as those in eastern and northwestern Kenya (i.e. Eastern Province and upper Rift Valley province).

It is clear from the above discussion that Islam formed an important foundation for making the Wajir PDC work a success. For instance, Islam is the near exclusive religion of the district and Somali traditions are informed by this religion. As such it make for a credible reference point for public morality and, as with the case of the Al Fatah Declaration, provides both the institutions (e.g. Madrassa) within which legitimate and revered negotiations can take place and the shared moral or legal script to undergird resolutions. Obviously, each community will provide a different ideal entry point for peace making that is legitimate and carries weight. Thus, while Islam may be critical entry point for peace making in Wajir, it is less of so in Isiolo where there is a mix of religions (Christianity, Islam, and traditional). In other areas such as Northwest Kenya where traditional religion is more prevalent, peace-making efforts have relied on other areas of commonality between warring groups, in this case veterinary services.

There are several lessons that one can draw from this case in contemplating replication or policy options. An obvious caveat is that each case conflict is deeply idiosyncratic and best understood and prescribed for though an in-depth understanding of its history, factors and changing contexts. In addition, it is obvious that besides the peculiar

conditions that obtain in this case, the usual imperatives such as a highly committed coterie of individuals who bring energy and leadership and who are entrepreneurial on behalf of peace have contributed to the success of WPDC.

From the WPDC, we can suggest the following lessons:

- Traditional institutions can play a significant role in providing legitimate frameworks for negotiating peace, enforcing sanctions, and providing the state with the legitimacy it often lacks at the grassroots levels.
- Even where civil society is the leading actor in resolving conflicts (including ones where the state is complicit either through commission or neglect), collaboration with the state is essential. This is especially so since the state is the only organ with legitimate and often sufficient force to enforce sanctions.
- Multi-sectoral engagements and a varied base of supporters who can bring both a diverse set of resources and representing a diverse set of interests is essential for success and sustainability. For instance the involvement of women, youth, elders, businesspeople, and the government and local branches of international NGOs was critical to WPDC functions.
- Not insignificantly, the minimal involvement of donors and external actors in facilitating the work of WPDC may actually be helpful for such efforts. It allows the local organization to pursue its own agenda and to work out local connections (e.g. collaboration with the state at the local level) without the subversion of its priorities to fit donor trajectories, or without unnecessarily making government anxious about outside influence.

Successful as the WPDC case is, it also presents some openings that could have (and still could) enhanced its effects and its long-term contribution to peace. This is especially where, as noted, the WPDC has not been able to envision very long-term issues especially in terms of pushing for structural interventions that could mitigate the very foundation of conflict in this region. Thus, for example, peace radio could be one additional means of pursuing the peace agenda in the regions. This would be especially useful for advocacy, civic education and early warning efforts. Second, development efforts beyond rehabilitating (ex-) combatants and the youth are essential. Especially critical is the development of markets to reduce the vulnerabilities of pastoralists such that they can liquidate their livestock when drought hits and thus minimize the strain and competition for ever-scarce pasture. This is obviously a long-term effort and one that involves the state at a fairly macro level than what the WPDC has been used to dealing with. However, given such a scheme would have to find local expression and indeed participation, the WPDC is very well placed to advocate for its adoption and its use by communities.

Finally, enhancing state capacity is critical to institutionalizing peace in the region. As is evident, the success of WPDC (indeed, its very existence) has emanated from the

state's weakness in projecting and fulfilling its security imperative. As with the range of public goods increasingly provided by NGOs in African countries, security is fundamentally an obligation of the state; it ought to or will eventually be reclaimed by it through an enhancement of its capacity. Thus, while small organizations such as WPDC may be integral to mediating for conflicts and establishing local dialogues and institutions encouraging peaceful coexistence, the state is the ultimate guarantor of peace. For lasting peace to prevail it should not be neglected.

## Al Fatah Declaration

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### ALFATAH PEACE DECLARATION 29/9/93

- (a) Taking stock of the increasing intensity of inter-clan fighting between the major clans in Wajir district and especially between Degodia and the Ajuran clans which have continued to claim lives of tens of people, many of them children, women and innocent;
- (b) Considering one increasing insecurity in the district in which violent robberies, looting of property and highway robberies affecting them major roads connecting Wajir and Nairobi have continued to take place with alarming frequencies;
- (c) Dismayed with the recent callous murder of the late Jeff Buttler and the serious injury of Bob McCarthy both working with UNICEF and the subsequent suspension of NGO activities in the district;
- (d) Apprehensive of the imminent danger posed for the entire district the banditry menace and the clan clashes.

Leaders from the major clans namely twenty-five elected and opinion leaders each from Degodia, Ajuran and Ogaden clans respectively as well as five leaders from Garreh and Muralle clans met to deliberate on the causes of the continuing internecine strife with a view to bringing the problem to an end.

The joint leaders peace meeting taking place of Alfatah Madarasah in Wajir township between 27<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1993 makes the following resolutions:

- 1. That the inter clan fighting and stock theft be stopped immediately and a cease fire be effected from the 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1993.
- 2. That during this cease fire, livestock stolen from from Ogaden clans by Degodia and vise versa be mutually returned within seven days effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1993.
- 3. That in order to clear the main Wajir-Nairobi road of gangestry, three sets of committees be formed with specific responsibilities of clearing specified areas namely:
  - (a) Habaswein-Lag-bogol
  - (b) Lagbogol-Leheley, and
  - (c) Leheley-Wajir sections of the road of the highway gangsters. The

peace committees working in these various zones will involve elders, leaders and security personnel comprising local officers drawn from the administration police in Wajir district.

4. That Wajir people without distinction will work as a united people to eliminate the banditry menace in the district. To realize this the government is urged to work closely with the various panels of peace committees from the district headquarters to the sub-location level, who will monitor the implementation of this peace agreement and advise the authorities on the best method of eliminating the banditry menace.
5. That all minority clans in the district should join hands with the major clans in this peace campaign,
6. That all those persons or families who have deserted their homes or grazing areas or watering places, should go back immediately to their areas and enjoy peace.
7. That from the date of this ceasefire, the traditional law pertaining to blood feud will apply to those who commit murder namely the payment of hundred camels for a man and fifty camels for a woman. In the case of stock theft, the rule of collective punishment involving whole groups of people will be applied.
8. That a standing committee comprising eight people from each of the major clans as well as two from the smaller clans will be formed at the district level to work with the District Security Committee for the purpose of restoring peace in the district.
9. That all clans must begin to persuade armed elements among them to submit or surrender their arms to the government.
10. That the Provincial Administration being the executive arm of the government, should instill discipline and sense of duty in the Security personnel as well as Chiefs and District Officers, so that officers working in areas where banditry menace will appear to increase instead of decrease after the implementation of this peace programme will be responsible.
11. That all NGO's namely, World Vision International, African Inland Church, Care International, Oxfam, African Muslim Agency, the United Nations especially Unicef and WFP, and Bilateral Agencies specifically GTZ be requested to come back and resume their operations in the district.

The people of Wajir and the local administration will ensure that adequate security arrangements are made for the same personnel and their operations.

12. That the government consider the formation of a specific forces to be deployed specifically for the purpose of fighting the banditry menace. It is recommended that task force comprise mainly local officers from administration and police force.
13. That henceforth the government should take firm action against those who are found to incite people to violent fan clans clashes.
14. That Wajir people will make a public demonstration on September, 1993 condemning the inter-clan conflict and the case murder of the late Jeff Buttler and to manifest there to have all humanitarian agencies back in the district.

Find appended list of signatories to the declaration.

CC.

District Commissioner,

Wajir

Provincial Commissioner,

North Eastern Province,

Garissa

Permanent Secretary in the Office of the

President -Incharge of Internal Security

United Nations -UNICEF & WFP

GTZ

All NGOs

All MPs -Northern Kenya Parliamentary Group

The Mass Media

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The Phase I Jie-Dodoth and Turkana Expanded Border Harmonization Meeting at Lodwar. PARC-VAC Project, OAU/IBAR. 19-21 August, 1999.

The Phase II Merile-Turkana Expanded Border Harmonization Meeting at Lokichoggio. PARC-VAC Project, OAU/IBAR. 3-5 November, 1999.

The Phase II Jie-Dodoth and Turkana Expanded Border Harmonization Meeting at Lodwar. PARC-VAC Project, OAU/IBAR. 12-15 November, 1999.

The Phase I Pokot-Tepeth and Turkana Expanded Border Harmonization Meeting at Lokichoggio. PARC-VAC Project, OAU/IBAR. 18-20 November, 1999.

Organization of African Unity. Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources. [Report on] Karamojong Cluster Harmonization Meetings. Lodwar, Kenya. December 6-8, 1999.



## Persons Interviewed

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1. Ms. Nuria Abdilahi, Secretary to WPDC
2. Mr. Mohamedweli Hassan, Drought Containment Project
3. Dr. Chip Stem, OAU/IBAR PARC-VAC Project
4. Mr. Mohamed Elmi, Oxfam Great Britain
5. Mr. Abdisalan Gure, District Cooperative Officer
6. Mr. AbdiNasir Harun, Nomadic Primary Health Project
7. Mr. Abdi Billow Elmi, District Commissioner's Office
8. Mr. Abdirahman Abass, Arid Land Resource Management Project
9. Mr. Fred Mutsami, District Commissioner, Wajir
10. Dr. Asenath Omwega, ITDG
11. Mr. David Ngare, Manager Wajir Polytechnic
12. Mr. Mahmud Maalim, District Officer I, Wajir

### *Focus Groups:*

1. Al Fatah Elders (15)
2. Women for Peace (3)